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## **HESC Update December 2021**

### **2022-23 Processing Updates**

The 2022-23 application for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) opened on October 1, 2021.

- HESC was notified about issues applicants experienced with linking to the NYS payment application from the 2022-23 FAFSA confirmation page. The issue seems to be resolved at this time. Students who were unable to link to the NYS Payment Application can apply on the HESC website once their FAFSA application is processed.
- Processing of 2022-23 applications, missing information and application updates is currently underway. However, 2022-23 Student Status Listings (SSL) will not be produced until early Spring 2022.
- Please make sure you provide student ID numbers for your students as schools will not receive any information about the students' accounts without student ID associated with their applications.

In addition, the 2022-23 STEM Scholarship application opened on October 1, 2021.

### **2021-22 Processing Updates**

#### **TAP Processing**

The first Spring 2022 roster was produced on December 8, 2021.

Technical Issue with Roster 005 for Fall 2021

- There were several students who had not successfully completed the income verification process that were included on November Roster 005 in error.
- The issue was resolved and only students with verified income will remain placed on this roster
- Any student included on TAP roster 005 without verified income was resent to Tax and Finance for IVP verification. There were no changes made for those students who were successfully processed through IVP.
- Students who could not be successfully verified through the IVP process have been decertified by HESC to remove them from Roster 005 and their accounts reset to pending IVP
- Once successfully verified, they will be processed on a new roster for certification
- Students who were paid in error were notified by HESC on December 3<sup>rd</sup> that their account will be reset to pending until income verification is completed. A notification and list of impacted students was also shared with schools.

## Excelsior Scholarship

- Currently the application period for the 2021-22 academic year is closed. To learn when the next Excelsior Scholarship Application period opens, we encourage students to sign up to be notified at [hesc.ny.gov/excelsior](https://hesc.ny.gov/excelsior)
- Prior Excelsior recipients MUST complete the 2021-22 NYS Payment Application to renew their awards for the 2021-22 academic year.
- Both new and renewing applicants are submitted to NYS Tax & Finance to verify income.
  - Students whose household income is over income level will receive a denial notice.
  - Students who cannot be verified are sent an Income Questionnaire, which must be completed and returned to HESC for processing.
- Income must be successfully verified for students to receive their awards. Awards will not be placed on a manifest if income verification is outstanding. Students will be decertified with a '9' miscellaneous denial if not verified by the end of the academic year.
- Schools can utilize the QGE012-Pending Income Verification Report to capture the population of students who have income verification issues.

## 2020-2021 Processing

Schools should complete any pending certifications for the 2020-21 academic year for all programs now. In addition, all schools should utilize the error reports on the HESC website to review and resubmit any outstanding errors for this period.

Excelsior recipients who were required but failed to file the 2020-21 NYS Payment Application to renew their awards will be decertified. HESC will decertify their 2020-21 awards with a '9' miscellaneous decertification code, which will allow the student to remain eligible in subsequent year if they file the NYS Payment Application by the deadline and meet the qualifications.

## COVID Impacted Processing Updates

HESC has processed all certifications that were submitted with the COVID-impacted indicator. The 2019-20 year is closed for payment and all those certifications should already be processed. 2020-21 certifications are still being accepted.

- Students can be certified using COVID flag for terms in the 2020-21 academic year in which the Governor's Executive Order declaring a State disaster emergency for the entire state, remains in effect.
  - Fall 2020, Winter 2021, and Spring 2021
- NYS financial aid award recipients who are:
  - Eligible for financial aid at the 100% liability date
  - Impacted by COVID-19
    - School makes determination
  - Information currently on HESC website.
- Schools who indicated the COVID flag in error should send a request to have the flag removed to [priorityservices@hesc.ny.gov](mailto:priorityservices@hesc.ny.gov)

## 2019-20 Processing

- The 2019-20 academic year is CLOSED for processing.
- Certification transactions received from schools will not be processed.
- Schools should begin remitting 2019 refunds as reported on their Term Payment Accounting Reports or Consolidated Scholarship Remittance Advices.
- Any requests to decertify student records for closed academic years must be sent to our Payments Unit
  - [payments@hesc.ny.gov](mailto:payments@hesc.ny.gov) or Fax to 518-473-3749

## HESC Financial Aid Services Modernization Project

- Vision: Provide a fully operational, state-of-the-art, financial aid services system that vastly improves the user experience and quality of communications, increases efficiency and productivity, and reduces costs.
- Key Success Factors:
  - Applicant-Friendly
  - Modern, client-centric public UX
  - Seamless Integration with Schools
  - Application Processing Efficiency
  - 24/7 dashboard for statuses, updates, and document retrieval
  - Real-time email/text communications, account updates/status changes
  - Reduction of Operational Costs
  - Elimination of Application Backlog
  - Elimination of Paper Processing
  - Migration from mainframe-based files to modern CRM platform
  - Robust and flexible framework to easily add new programs
- Current Status:
  - RFP development is currently underway including documenting business functional and non-functional requirements.
  - Three focus groups comprised of members from all school sectors, is completed. Groups include financial aid officers, bursars, certifying officers.
  - HESC Project Team staffing is ongoing
- Next steps:
  - Start focus group meetings
  - Target of second Quarter 2022 for RFP issuance.
  - Target of fourth Quarter 2022 to award project to selected vendor and execute contract.

## What to Look Out For...

- Webinar to discuss processing students who were deregistered based on the SUNY/CUNY COVID Vaccine mandate
- Excelsior enhancements for early certification/decertification of awards
- Nurses for Our Future Scholarship